

EU digitalises passenger registration to make travelling by sea safer: Council agrees its position

The EU is moving to digitalise the registration of ship passengers to ensure that, in the event of an accident, search and rescue services have immediate access to information on the people on board. To make it easier to assist victims and their relatives, the recorded data will include passengers' nationality.

Further progress on this was made today when the **Council agreed its position on updated requirements for registering passengers and crew on board European passenger ships** which contain these new provisions. Having immediate access to passenger data may be critical, for example, in assisting in the search and rescue process. It may also prevent unnecessary anxiety on the part of relatives and friends.

"These new rules improve safety, which is obviously a key element in all our maritime legislation," said Joe Mizzi, the Maltese Minister for Transport and Infrastructure.

"But on top of that, they encourage innovation and digitalisation in the passenger transport industry, which will help boost the sector's competitiveness, in particular, by reducing administrative burdens."

Under current rules, passenger registration information is stored by the shipping company, and the search and rescue centre contacts the company's registrar in the event of an emergency. The system relies on the availability of the contact person, and valuable minutes may be lost before the rescue operation is launched.

Under the new requirements, data will no longer be kept by the shipping company but will be **made immediately available to the relevant authority in electronic format**. The two means of transmission, namely the National Single Windows and the Automatic Identification System were included in the original Commission proposal and were maintained by the Council.

The proposed new rules also **include nationality in the data to be recorded**, in addition to name, date of birth, gender, and -if the passenger so wishes- the need for special assistance in an emergency. At present, the recorded information does not always include nationality, which makes it more difficult to assist victims and their relatives.

Compared with the Commission proposal, the Council text extends from one to three years the "transposition" period for incorporating the new rules into national legislation. To avoid unnecessary administrative burdens, the Council gives member states which have neither maritime ports nor ships flying their flag the option of not transposing the directive.

The proposal was presented by the Commission last June. It is part of a broader review of EU passenger ship safety legislation, which aims to make travelling by sea safer while simplifying the rules and cutting administrative costs.

How will this proposal become law?

The "general approach" adopted today is the Council's position for talks with the European Parliament. The Parliament has not yet adopted its position on this proposal. Both institutions must agree on the text before it can enter into force.

[Registration of ship passengers – Council position \(general approach\)](#)

[Registration of persons on board passenger ships – summary of current legislation](#)

[Registration of ship passengers – Commission proposal](#)